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Authors: Mäkinen Maarit  
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### Abstract

This paper aims to clarify how journalists perceive the roles of their audiences in networked and participatory innovation environments. The focus is on different levels of interaction between innovation journalism and the public, and the types of roles audience is interpreted in journalistic discourse and practices. The study is based on the semi-structured interviews of 69 journalists in Finland, the United States and Japan.

The context of this study is today's communication environment, which enables various possibilities for participatory practices and collaboration. This part of the study aims to 1) identify the roles of audiences in journalistic discourse, to 2) describe the types of interaction and collaboration between journalists and audiences in the examined countries, and to 3) open up discussion about the potentials of collaboration in innovation journalism.

The comparative analysis of the three countries indicates that there are expectations related to user generated contents, but the editorial improvements for collaboration are lagging behind the growth of public activism in social media. Most journalists are willing to embrace and utilize the tools of social media, but the editorial practices for collaboration are mostly conventional. The amateur contents are seen separate from professional journalism. However, some new online media startups with new business models seem to pioneer in finding new concepts in collaborative practices.

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# Innovation Journalists and Participatory Audiences

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## 1. Social innovations call for collaboration

Traditionally, generating innovation has been seen as a top-down process, but this has moved on to a more open and participatory approach. Rather than one actor trying to find all the answers, different actors can join in to develop collaborative innovative solutions.

The user-centered approach is emphasized in the theories of the so-called participatory economy<sup>ii</sup>, and the importance of user involvement has been noted both in the business and governmental sectors. People are invited to participate in developing new products, services, or their surroundings. Innovative individuals and communities are recognized as valuable partners in innovation processes.

Many of the challenges facing innovation environments occur and call for solutions both in local and global levels (climate change, aging of population, economic recession<sup>1</sup>), and many of them require innovative solutions other than technical or economical. According to the study commissioned to OECD innovation strategy work, a deeper understanding of user needs will be an important driver of innovation; and we will see new business thinking and models where companies assume a much higher level of social responsibility (The New Nature of Innovation 2009). Besides products or processes, innovations are recognized also as e.g. service innovations and social innovations.

Social innovations are included in a wide conceptualization of innovation. The term has overlapping meanings, but mostly it refers to new concepts, ideas and organizations that meet social needs – from working conditions and education to community development and health<sup>iii</sup> (Hautamäki 2008). Distance learning, assisted living or microcredits are examples of social innovations. Economic recession creates more needs for social services and with the diminishing public funding we need to be more innovative. Environmental challenges again require innovative solutions.

Open innovation is another trendy term, which has been used in describing the openness of innovation process where internal and external actors can join developing something together. Open source coding<sup>iv</sup> is an example of this type of activity, but the model has been mobilized also in social contexts, particularly in business. Open source model is quite close to the term disruptive innovations which challenge the established practices or products (e.g. Lemola 2009).

The journalists interviewed for this study were familiar with the terms social and service innovations, and eagerly paid attention to them. Many journalists would like to cover social innovations more, but they see this field of innovations still incoherent and unexplored. They may consider immaterial innovations difficult to identify and write about. Media seems to be willing to cover social innovation issues like new services, political decisions or new ways of action, but the cases are not handled any differently from other issues (e.g. Wiio 2006, p. 67). They are not called as social innovations in journalistic work. *“The social innovations have always been there, like skiing holidays, but they have not been called such”* (FI 15). Some of the interviewees defined social innovations as political and social improvements like healthcare; some came with ideas about citizen activism and new ways of improving society in grassroots (like Carrotmob movement); and some could see social innovations mainly connected to new activities in social media.

## 2. Journalists see themselves as interpreters of innovations

Most of the interviewed journalists didn't consider writing innovation journalism but good or low quality of journalism. Writing about innovations requires studying new and often abstract things, and trying to demystify them to the audience. Most of the journalists emphasized their own roles as interpreting and offering in-depth analysis. However, they were usually disaffected with the outcomes of journalism in interpreting and analyzing innovations. The Japanese journalists appeared the most critical towards the performance of journalism in their country (see also Yada 2007). They seemed to stress the social responsibilities in their positions.

Most journalists in all three countries mentioned the importance of analytical presentation of new things: *“I see our place in that world being kind of a bridge, we are not writing just to the insiders, we are attempting to sort of have an in-depth knowledge about innovation world, write the stories in a way that translates to average person”*. (US 14) This is close to the idea of so-called service journalism, which aims to respond to and

offer advice on the everyday concerns of their audiences (Eide & Knight 1999). This approach in its prevalent sense sets journalists in roles of information providers and audiences in roles of receiving customers (Heikkilä 2001). Journalists specialized only in technical or environmental issues could also see their own roles in explaining and anticipating innovations, sometimes also foreseeing the misuses of new technology.

Many of the journalists considered acting as watchdogs on authorities and decision making processes. The watchdog performance of journalism was not usually considered sufficient and they looked for more critical and questioning reporting. Some of the journalists mentioned the need for investigative journalism. Media should call things into question more and examine the motives behind decisions. Media should give some background perspectives and also aim to foresee new things or ideas that might turn into innovations. It would be important for media also to foresee times of crisis, so that people would be better prepared to handle new situations and discuss them in the early stages.

Even though the need for more investigative, critical and watchdog type of journalism was often mentioned in the interviewees, the journalists did not usually look for solutions in audience participation. However, many scholars suggest that media should collaborate more with their audiences to supplement their local and investigative reporting. Participatory audiences could contribute to more critical, more specialized and more localized journalism.

### 3. Innovation journalism do not meet participatory audiences

Social media and online networks have transformed the communication environment. The publishing activities in different social media arenas like blogs or wikis are the present trends in participatory information production. Some of these amateur websites have become considerable sources of news, specialized information, or discussion platforms.

The public is clearly part of the news process, and we might ask whether civic media production could complete the insufficient work of the professional media<sup>v</sup>. Already many readers go online in search of more in-depth and interpretive stories from diverse news sources, including news blogs and citizen journalism<sup>vi</sup>. People use their social networks and networking technology to filter, assess, and react to news. People's experience of news, especially on the internet, is turning into a shared social experience. As audiences turn to active users and producers of contents, we could ask are news too important to be left to the journalists alone? It appears that audiences want to directly access the "source code" of the news. (Bruns 2008, p.72-73)

Many scholars see participatory audiences as untapped potential (e.g. Gillmor 2004; Rosen 2010). Participatory audiences could e.g. fact-check journalism and gate watch conventional media production. Bloggers and citizen journalists are also potential providers of local or specialized information and analyze reporting which may be insufficiently covered by professionals. Audience contribution seems to be a welcomed

addition to newspapers, which are forced to reduce their staff and costs in order to survive. Innovation policy experts (interviewees/E1-E7) also see consumers and audiences as important actors in innovation processes. The aims of the policy to support bottom-up innovations and more demand-driven development have similarities with the raising interests of media to collaborate with their audiences.

We asked journalists in three continents to describe their relation with audiences. We wanted to outline the roles of audiences as our interviewees see them. We asked what kind of interaction there is. And how do journalists see the new trends of participatory journalism?

Most of the journalists interviewed referred to social media and journalistic weblogs; but the roles of audiences were mainly represented conventionally in their relations to media. The relations between journalists and audiences are somehow contradictory and in a state of transition. There is a call for new types of grassroots participation and interaction, but the actual practices are still under development.

Many of the journalists interviewed saw people having more power than before in contributing information and voicing opinions in the public sphere: *“Now we are in a world without borders with digital cameras, blogs etc - - I don’t think we have integrated that into our profession as much as we should have. We have to recognize that to some extent, everyone is a journalist.”* (US 9) This is the trend that most journalists recognize and also mentioned in the discussions.

But then, there are some journalists who are quite distressed about the requirements to include readers: *“What a hell these ordinary people do in (scientific) magazine’s columns if they do not understand the issues? For them it is most essential to receive the information.”* (FI 17)

In studying the journalistic discourse, we could identify so-called “traditionalists” – those who want to maintain a hierarchical relationship between journalists and audiences, and “convergers” – those who feel users should be given more freedoms within news sites (Robinson 2010). When asked about the interaction between journalists and readers, some of the interviewees highlighted the need to serve audiences better or the importance of writing stories about ordinary people (traditionalists). But then again, some of the interviewees stressed the importance of their audiences in fact checking and even correcting their stories (convergers). Naturally these differences of interaction also go hand in hand with the medium (e.g. online/print) and their target audience.

The traditionalists were found in all countries of this study, but they seemed to be more common among the Japanese interviewed: *“I don’t think that internet has brought any direct changes. There are some reactions from the readers, - - some of them point out our mistakes. - - I think we should not pay too much attention to them. - - Some readers are very critical, and make various comments on each topic, but we cannot argue back against constantly.”* (JP 8) However, some of the Japanese interviewees also criticized the lack of interaction, and they would like to see news organizations renewed. In some

Japanese newspapers the feedback from audience are channeled to special departments, not to the editors. When the media space and control over what it contains are shared, it means a dramatic conceptual and practical shift for journalists who face a radical decline in their power to oversee the information flow (Singer 2009; Deuze 2005). Some journalists take a defensive position to protect their roles as information providers, and some see this as a way of building new types of relationships with audiences.

The convergers are inspired by the growth of options audience has acquired. They see the importance of people participating in public spheres: *“Their ability to input opinion and offer further information and weigh on issues is much more increased now than it was five or ten years ago. And that’s a good thing, - - and there is more intensified sense of shared experience, - -*” (US 2) Competent criticism from the readers is also valued: *“This happened a couple of times on the web when I misunderstood something and someone is taken the time to explain it to me and its not accusatory, they’re just like “oh you’ve slightly misunderstood the way a battery works”, and they take the time to explain it and that helps me and I thank them and, there are cool moments in amongst it all, that way”* (US 2).

Mostly audiences are encouraged to participate, and there is a lot of talk about reader relationship building but not many actual practices. This was typical among the Finnish journalists interviewed. Most journalists were unsatisfied with the state of their editorial office's efforts to interact with readers. Though journalists see clear changes in audience behavior in online spheres, this has not changed their professional roles. Also the chances of ordinary people gaining influential roles are considered modest among Finnish journalists. People are mostly seen as customers or users, not as active developers in innovation environments (cf. the consumer-oriented idea of service journalism, e.g. Eide & Knight 1999). Since this market driven approach has spread over every sector in society, people are often identified mainly as captive audiences and customers also in journalism. Thus journalists could mention the examples of audience participation in testing new tools or take part in contests, but rarely contributing to e.g. political discussions or looking for new ideas in social issues.

#### 4. Audiences react but not contribute

If we are looking for user innovations as policy discourse suggests, but there are no structural enablers for social innovation practices, could media then act as a medium? Could media act as a facilitator in developing elderly care or solving environmental problems? Could media involve people in the processes of social innovation? What if aged people were invited to plan elderly care or assisted living in a newspaper? *“That is a very good idea. I am going to sort it out. Usually the elderly opinions are not asked - -*” (FI 9)

Since the innovation processes are considered open, external actors are seen as a crucial part of innovation capability. This has been noted in most companies, but it is also valid in cases of developing intangible assets or social innovations. Besides internal and

external actors working together towards a common target, open innovation demands ongoing dialogue between the actors. This refers to continuous and evolving nature of open innovation processes and the importance of interaction between the actors.

If media were to open up as a more dialogical and sharing environment, it would need more collaborative practices with audiences. Thus news could also be seen as a process, never finished, always continuing, and gradually evolving towards a better understanding of 'the truth', or at least taking steps towards it (Bruns 2008, p. 82). Open media environment appears as a conversational and unfinished sphere, where people are involved and have influence. As one journalist remarked, this demands participation in early stages of the processes: *"This openness is often only apparent. If a journalist just sends his/her story and tell people to comment on that, it doesn't make sense - - We should allow people to be involved in earlier stages of the journalistic processes."* (FI 17) If people are included only after the decisions are made, their views do not count.

Social media offers potential tools for communication, but using social media does not always connote interaction. Journalists may use new tools in traditional ways, e.g. by sending their blog posts without a comment capability or they ignore the online feedback from their readers. In social media, the discourse by journalists and readers alike may easily take place without any interaction. The interaction may also be indirect; e.g. the interaction may take place only between blogs and not inside one single blog. This may even occur before the story comes out and the source person blogs about his/her conversation with the journalist (US 4).

On the other hand, offline interaction is also considered and present. Some journalists mentioned seminars, gatherings, reading groups and writing contests as ways of approaching readers and get them more involved. This was mostly the case with aged readers. One Japanese journalist described how their readers could even contact the editorials for help in their problems. *"They ask about living at home when they get older - - or the person would like to live in the nursing home - - or what is the best kind of insurance - - I try to introduce and explain things the best I can for the readers."* (JP 1)

There are clear changes in audience behavior which are in consequence of active use of social media (see also Jenkins & Deuze 2008). Audiences react by sending feedback or comments more easily, and they are more critical towards the objectivity of media. They are more likely to share, filter and process media contents in social media platforms. The media representatives interviewed had noted this change, and there is definitely more interaction and more options for social intercourse between journalists and audiences than before.

## 5. Most journalists hold on their positions as gatekeepers

The journalists defined the roles of their audiences on a scale of traditionalists and convergers and somewhere between. The described roles varied from passive readers to conversationalists, gate watchers and contributors. Most journalists were positive towards the idea of more participatory audiences, but there were also some worried comments

concerning the flaming nature of online interaction. The changing roles of audiences can be illustrated as a chart. The chart (below) is modified from an illustration by Sirkkunen (Lietsala & Sirkkunen 2008, p.153) and edited to apply this study.

<b>Audience</b>	<b>Journalist</b>	<b>Type of Interaction</b>
readers, customers	producer, gatekeeper	one-way
conversationalists	producer, moderator	two-way
assistants, gate watchers	producer, generator	two-way
contributors, creators	media worker, gate opener	multi-way

Figure 2: The roles of audiences vary from receiving readers to contributing participants in our focus group study; and the roles of journalists are in a state of change too.

The first two of the roles (one-way reader and conversationalist) are the most common ways of placing the audience. Journalists aim to serve their audience as customers, and most of them are willing to discuss with them but still hold on to their positions as gatekeepers and moderators.

Some of the journalists interviewed could consider audience as assistants and e.g. appreciate them checking the facts. However, the contributing role is mostly seen as unrelated from the professionals' content production and many of the journalists do not see any need for them to converge. Some of the journalists could see the media sphere opening to diverse contributors who are networking and partnering. Some journalists welcome this new kind of openness, but others are quite adverse to it, especially the older journalists.

Could we then find any signs of collaboration with so-called "former audience"? (Gillmor 2004) A growing number of newspapers and new media organizations are supplementing their recourses by collaborating with other organizations and audiences. There are some practices of collaboration and crowd sourcing<sup>vii</sup>. A Korean news organization, *OhMyNews* (founded in 2000) is one of the first experiments of pro-am - journalism on a larger scale. Some other often mentioned examples are *The Seattle Times*, *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *Ground Report* and *Global Voices*. There are also some new concepts practiced by e.g. online media startups. Some of them ask their audiences to select or rate their stories, or audience can create and manage their own contents. There are freelancers' online business models, which ask for donations from their audiences for writing stories (e.g. *Spot Us*). KQED's *Quest* involves community organizations in content production as part of its multimedia news production. *Tech Crunch* is an online startup, which offers (besides online contents) seminars and gatherings with famous speakers. Most of the new models are more about sharing or personalization of information than audience contribution.



The Finnish journalists interviewed for our study were concerned about not having enough ways to collaborate with their audiences: *“It should be more. Something should be developed to get people involved and interact - - a mobile device might be a way for that”*. (FI 33) Many of the journalists writing about environmental issues emphasized the importance of creating forums for citizen discussion. Some of them had e.g. encouraged their readers to write their views and questions concerning environment, and also involved politicians to join the discussion: *“We found a new environmental problem (humus matter in a lake) just by asking local people to write to us - - even though not everyone was happy about that to be published - - (laughs).”* (FI 33) Our study indicates that discussions about climate change are now more focused on looking for solutions than arguing about it.

The Finnish journalists writing about aging interact with audiences mainly offline: *“We have received 500-600 letters for our writing contest so far and only 50 of them online. - - However, we are now planning an online survey to find out how our readers would define a good life.”* (FI 32) The active seniors are asked to join the seminars and surveys of the journals, but unfortunately it is not possible for the ones who are already in need for external assistance. The aged who have passed their active and productive years are represented too often only as an incapacitated problem in society.

The journalists interviewed in the US also considered the conversation and collaboration with the audience as essential, but the ways to practice it inadequate. Some of them considered themselves collaborating with their audience every day by e-mail and social media. However, in many cases this meant only their presence in Twitter or Facebook, and this would rarely concretize in contributing something with their audience. On the other hand, some journalists were eager to collaborate in novel ways, and social media is a useful tool for that: *“I might send an enquiry to Twitter: what’s your opinion on this? - - once I asked if anyone knew how to repair a broken iPhone. Someone replied - - and I never would have found this information otherwise.”* (US 9) Some of the journalists could even think people modifying their stories.

The Japanese journalists were aware of the trends of participatory and citizen journalism, but the ways of interaction with their audiences seem traditional and mostly one-way vertical<sup>viii</sup>. They may receive feedback about the stories, but it does not lead to dialogic conversations or improving the stories. Some of them look at their audience quite critically, which may seem patronizing: *“- - we cannot argue back constantly (a journalist explaining why the comments cannot always be replied) “(JP 8). “They are very naïve taking everything as it is in the articles. I think most of the Japanese do not have enough media literacy. - - Generally speaking, most of the readers write to us only when they have something to complain about.”* (JP 5) The feedback doesn’t usually lead to ideas for stories. However, the aged readers may call journalists with their problems, and the journalists try to take them into account in their stories. Some of the Japanese interviewed would increase collaboration, but the attitudes are mostly traditional. One of the interviewees described how media should tell the difference between useful information and “the noise” (JP 12) referring to the service type of duty media holds.

## 6. Five stages of participation

The participatory practices mentioned in interviews were only few, but we could categorize them to five different stages of audience participation introduced by Domingo et al in their article (Domingo et al. 2008; Singer 2009). The collaborative practices go hand in hand with the roles of the journalists. The traditionalist types of journalists were likely to see their audiences in less participatory positions than the ones closer to the so-called convergers.

The first stage of participation, *1) the interpretation stage* happens when audience can discuss journalists' stories after publication. It is practiced in most cases, even though there are also some journals without any readers' column online or offline. This is often considered as discussions among readers, not necessarily with journalists. The journalists in our interviewees usually join the discussions only when invited personally. The second stage of participation, *2) the distribution stage*, denotes users disseminating stories produced by journalists. This is typical in the arenas of social media, e.g. Facebook or Twitter, where people share the news they have found interesting. This type of sharing is a much more common use of social media than contribution of something new (Pew 2010). The distribution usually denotes information flows among people but not participation in news production processes. This did not seem to raise discussion among the interviewees.

The third stage of participation, *3) the processing or editing stage* includes users' contribution. This happens when readers e.g. inform journalists that they haven't covered the story well or there are mistakes in it. Readers may correct journalists' errors and help them improve their work. This was rare but not impossible according to our survey. The fourth stage of participation, *4) the selection or filtering stage* is obviously a form of collaboration. This means that readers can decide what journalists are to cover. This could happen in social media when people donate money for a journalist to cover an issue. If enough people are ready to pay, the journalist covers a story and gets paid. This model was mentioned but not practiced by the journalists interviewed. However, many of them told using the ideas coming from their audiences for new stories.

The fifth stage of participation, *5) the access or observation stage* refers to people reporting stories themselves or serving as sources of specialized information. This is the most participatory stage, but does not necessarily require any collaboration with professional journalists. People may either contribute their own online publications or they may report stories for a media institution. Here most journalists consider people contributing among themselves and don't seriously look for models of collaborating with them. Some journalists mentioned riffling through online discussions and contacting some individuals for more information, but that was mainly a question of scanning different sources, not systemic collaboration for creating a story.

## 7. Collaborative practices should be developed

If news is defined as a process, never finished, always continuing and gradually evolving towards a better understanding, the collaborative dialogue with audiences appears advantageous. Journalists themselves thus become simply another group of participants in this ongoing dialogue and deliberation (Bruns 2008, p.80-83). This seems to fit well in the concept of innovation journalism, which aims to discuss the processes of innovations. From the perspective of continuing and collaborative innovation stories, formats that let people update the stories in real time could also be possible. This would allow collective writing and following the stages of innovations. The idea of an unfinished story would also allow corrections and additions while the uncertain process of innovation is evolving:

*“It is like what is happening in Wikipedia. There should be a place for that. I don’t know how you could know who is an expert, but certainly in most cases it is not the journalist. - We have to move towards where we can draw readers into the reporting and story telling processes, not just contributing images or words, but to help make the story better. Or give more contexts to it. We can do that.” (US 9)*

Wikipedia has implemented the idea of an unfinished and evolving information production. An entry in Wikipedia is liable to change the next day, the next hour, even the next minute. One of the interviewees mentioned the iPhone book that can be updated by the author at any given time. *“There might be story formats that allow updating the stories in real time. I think that is going to be a new format” (US 9)*. Wikinews has applied the idea to free news production, and there are other sites based on the same wiki principle.

The open and networked online sphere is favorable to processual story writing and collective activities. Citizens already utilize this open environment widely but new type of collaboration between users and journalists seems abstract in practice. The new situation confuses the old corporate model. Scholars talk about democratization of media when the tools for creating news have become feasible (Gillmor 2010); and many of them believe that this convergence of professional and amateur journalism could both rescue media corporations and empower the audience. On the other hand, this convergence understood as a top-down corporate-driven process may not follow the ideas of democracy, or rescue media organizations, for that matter.

The journalists interviewed also tend to prioritize their professional duties for their audiences: *“- if you sit around reading the comments on your story, you’re not writing a story, and they want the stories written” (US 21)*. Many journalists feel internal conflict within their companies and among the readers (also e.g. Robinson 2010). Media companies encourage audience collaboration, but they have neither the instruments nor the resources to exercise it.

## 8. Conclusion

Collaborative practices with an idea of unfinished story writing could well contribute in its part to the needs of innovation journalism. The journalists' interviewees in Finland, the United States and Japan indicate that the media coverage of innovations is inadequate. The interviewees stressed the active role of journalists in contributing investigative and critical journalism, but only seldom did they mention the contributive potential of audiences. However, many studies suggest including audience in news coverage and giving more diversified perspectives to the news. In innovation journalism, this can be especially fruitful when we consider innovations as processes which require following up and specialization.

It can be argued that audiences are the best specialists in many social issues and should therefore be invited to open forums of innovation. However, the user orientation, which is also emphasized in policy discourses, (e.g. Finland's Innovation Strategy 2008; interviewees/group d) does not seem to reflect much in journalistic discourse. Journalists might for example consider including people as contributors in their analytical reports about assisted living or health care issues.

The journalists in this study showed interest and appreciation of their audiences. The importance of media democratization was recognized, but the online activities of journalists and users seem to run on parallel tracks. Journalists often find their roles as bridges between the innovation world and average readers, and thus their interaction does not achieve the stage of collaboration. Mostly the participation happens on the stage of interpretation, where audience can comment on stories after publication, or on the stage of distribution, which denotes users disseminating stories in the forums of social media. The collaborative stages of participation, like the editing stage or the selection stage, were rarely mentioned in the interviews.

The main challenges on the way of participatory and collaborative journalism are presumably the conventional working methods which are unprepared for the logistics of the new public media sphere. Journalists are quite unaware of the ways this new media sphere could be usefully shared. Now when the roles of their audiences have changed, they have not necessarily clarified their own, renewed roles. Some of them hold on their conventional roles and want to maintain hierarchal relationships with audiences. Some may take a defensive position to protect their roles as information providers. Some journalists see more possibilities in participatory audiences and would like the media sphere to converge. Besides the traditionalists and the convergers, there are also journalists who prefer professional and amateur production to go in different directions. They embrace audience participation, but do not have interest in collaborating with them. The audience activities are somewhere out there.

Collaboration with audiences was often seen as a too labor intensive process. The journalists could not see realistic ways of monitoring the contribution coming from the audience. Many of them were concerned about the reliability of various news sources in the internet. It is challenging for people to sort through the proliferation of news and

figure out whom to trust and follow. Some of the journalists were hopeful to find innovative tools for increasing the collaboration, while some of them did not see any future in this area.

In sum, our interviewees indicated that journalists do not have enough tools or experience to practice collaborative journalism. Participatory audiences could contribute well to innovation journalism, but most journalists see the trend still evolving. However, our study shows that journalists have increasing dialogue with their audiences, even though many maintain their roles as gatekeepers and moderators.

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## Interviewees

The research material consists of in total 69 interviews from three different countries; Finland (n=34), the United States (n=21) and Japan (n=14). The interviewees represent three different thematic groups: business/technology reporters (the ones who typically write about innovation topics, n=35), journalists who focus on environment issues including climate change (n=18) and journalists who have written about issues related to aging (n=16). The Finnish focus group consists of journalists writing for daily newspapers and magazines (print/online), The American journalists are employed by newspapers, magazines and online publications. The Japanese journalists represent journalists writing for the five major daily newspapers. 39 of the interviewees were men and 30 were women. The interviewees are identified in this study by national codes FI1...FI34, US1...US21 and JP1...JP14. Interviewees within one national group were categorized alphabetically.

The interviews have been conducted by four different interviewers in several locations in Finland, Japan and the United States. The interviews were semi-structured interviews. There were two question patterns in use; one for the business/technology journalists and another for both the journalists who cover environment issues and the journalists who cover issues related to aging. The question patterns handled a broad variety of topics related to innovation journalism.

The Finnish journalists FI 1 – FI 34 (2008-2010)

The journalists interviewed in the US 1 – US 21 (2009-2010)

The Japanese journalists JP 1 – JP 14 (2009-2010)  
The expert interviewees in Finland E 1 – E 7 (2008)

## The web sites

Global Voices: <http://globalvoicesonline.org/>  
Ground Report: <http://www.groundreport.com/>  
The Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/>  
Le Monde: <http://www.lemonde.fr/>  
OhMyNews: <http://www.ohmynews.com/>  
Quest by KQED Public Media: <http://www.kqed.org/quest>  
The Seattle Times: <http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/>  
Spot Us: <http://www.spot.us/>  
Tech Crunch: <http://techcrunch.com/>

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<sup>i</sup> The research material consists of 69 interviews conducted in 2009 and 2010 among Finnish, American and Japanese journalists. The interviewees represent three thematic groups: innovation and/or business, energy/environment journalists and journalists who cover topics related to aging. The Finnish focus group consists of journalists writing for daily newspapers and magazines (print/online), The American journalists are employed by newspapers, magazines and online publications. The Japanese journalists represent journalists writing for the most substantial and old-established newspapers.

<sup>ii</sup> A trendy concept used by many scholars, which describes the new situation developing in web production and economics (Lietsala & Sirkkunen 2008). Benkler talks about the same idea, but uses the term networked information economy (2004)

<sup>iii</sup> The innovation policy discourse e.g. in Finland has named globalization, sustainable development, new technologies and aging of population as key drivers of change (Finland's National Innovation Strategy 2008 and Evaluation 2009).

<sup>iv</sup> In open source coding all the participants can use, modify and develop the application program (Weber 2004)

<sup>v</sup> E.g. just under two-thirds (63%) agree with statement that “major news organizations do a good job covering all the important news stories and subjects that matter to me.” 72% back the idea that “most news sources are biased in their coverage” (Pew Internet & American Life Project. March 1, 2010).

<sup>vi</sup> 92% of Americans use multiple platforms to get news on a typical day. People's relationship to news is becoming portable, personalized and participatory. (Pew Internet & American Life Project. March 1, 2010)

<sup>vii</sup> Obtaining information from the general public about current events, products and retail establishments ([http://www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia\\_term](http://www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia_term)). A central principle is that the group contains more knowledge than individuals.

<sup>viii</sup> The Japanese journalists represent journalists writing for the most substantial and old-established newspapers, which may show in their views.